175X the Turks (1475).[1] Contarini quarrelled with Ludovico the patron of the Georgian princes, and Barbaro saw the alliance between Uzun-Hassan and these princes—which had been propounded in Venice, Rome and Paris—come to an end with an attack on Tiflis by Uzun-Hassan.[2] The death of Uzun-Hassan in 1478 destroyed all prospect of a grand alliance of the east Pontic potentates and Persia against the new Ottoman power, and the Venetian agents found their perilous way back to Europe, having achieved nothing towards the solution of the contemporary political problem, but with a wide and new knowledge of lands from which their commerce was in future to be excluded.

The Venetians have left a sad picture of the anarchy and social dissolution in the Georgian lands at the end of the fifteenth century. In the politics of the moment the Imerian King, Bagrat II, was in the ascendant; the young Atabegi Bahadur at Akhaltzikhé was deporting himself as an independent [3] sovereign; great Georgian nobles like the Dadian Lipariti were so impoverished and so reckless that they were reduced to waylaying and blackmailing the ambassadors in the manner of common brigands; while after the capture of Tiflis by Uzun-Hassan, King Bagrati and Qwarqwaré of Samtzkhé were unable to find the 16,000 ducats which they had agreed to pay to the Turkoman tyrant, and they sought the favour of Barbaro in the valuation of stuffs which they were offering instead of money. On this occasion 4,000 or more people were carried away as slaves by the Persians.[4] Nevertheless, Barbaro found Kartli

> "a faire countrey, plentyfull of breade, wyne, fleshe, graine, and many other fruietes; the most parts of which wynes growe on trees as that doth in Trabisonda. . . . It hath a citie called Zifilis, by the which passeth the ryver Tigris, and that is a good towne, well inhabited." [5]

● 183 302 Barbaro[7] gives an interesting description of the Georgians of that time.

> "The men", he says, "are faire and bigge, but they have very fylthie apparill and most vile customes. They go with their heades

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[1] *Venetians in Persia*, p. 140.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 91. Cf. Brosset, *H. de la G.*, II, pp. 383–5. Constantine III of Kartli took part with Uzun-Hassan in the attack on Tiflis in order to secure the defeat of his usurping cousin Bagrat II of Imereti, who is the Georgian King Pancratio of the Venetian reports.

[3] Giurgura, mentioned by the Venetians, was Qwarqwaré, a cousin of the reigning Atabegi; he afterwards became Qwarqwaré III, but he had virtually ruled Samtzkhé during the reigns of Bahadur and Manuchar (1466–87), the sons of Qwarqwaré II. He died at the age of eighty-two in 1500.

[4] Barbaro (*V. in P.*), p. 91. [5] *Idem*, pp. 33–6.

7 [Josaphat Barbaro, see col 1340 p. 389 -- Arnold]

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rounded and shaven, leaving only a little heare,[1] after the manner of our abbotts that have great revenewes, and they suffer their mostacchi to growe a quarter of a yard longer than their beardes. On their heades they weare a litell cappe, of divers colors, w^th a creste on the toppe. On their backes they weare certein garments meetely lenge, but they be straite and open behinde downe to the buttocks; for otherwise they coulde not gett to horsebacke; wherein I do not blame them, for I see the Frenchmen use the like. On their feete and leggs they weare bootes or busgynes, made with their soles of such a sorte that wann they stande the heele and the too too^uche the grounde, but the plante of the foote standeth so high that yo^u may easilie thrust yor fyst undernethe w^thout hurting of it, whereof it foloweth that wann they go afoote, they go w^th paine. I wolde in this part blame them, if it were not that I know the Persians use the same. In their feeding (as I have seen the experience in the house of one of the principall of them) they use this maner. They have certain square tables of halfe a yarde brode, with a ledge round about; in the myddest whereof they putt a quantitie of panico sodden, w^thout salte or other fatt; and this they use in steade of podaige. On an other like table they putt the fleshe of a wilde bore, so litell brooyled that wann they cut it the bloudee cometh out, which they eate very willingely. I coulde not awaie w^thall, and therefore drave foo'the the tyme with that podaige. Wyne we had plentie and that trugged about lustilie: but other kinde of vittails we had none." [2]

Contarini, who appears to have been rather an impatient traveller, of the pompous and indignant kind with which all ages and all "natives" are familiar, had a poor opinion of the people, whom he had come to embroil in a new war. He was, he says, "*much annoyed by the Georgiani, who are as mad as the Mengrelians*[3] . . . *the brutes appeared never to have seen man before*".[4]

Contarini had sailed from Caffa for Atina, but he eventually landed near Fasso, whither he proceeded to Kutais and Gori. He found the Mingrelians in a bad way.

> "There are stone quarries in the country, and a little corn and wine is also produced, but of no great value. The men live miserably on millet made hard like polenta, and the women fare more miserably still; and were it not for a little wine and salt fish imported from Trebizond, and salt from Capha, they would be very badly off. They produce canvas and wax, but in small quantities. If they were industrious they might procure as much fish as they required from the rivers." [5]

Barbaro was a bluff, more genial man than Contarini, and his observations which have come down to us in William Thomas' English of the time of Mary I, have about them

[1] *Cf. Chardin*, p. 86.
[2] Contarini (*V. in P.*), p. 119.
[3] Barbaro (*V. in P.*), p. 36.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 118.